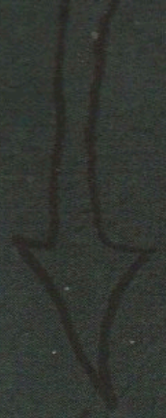
IRON MONKEY

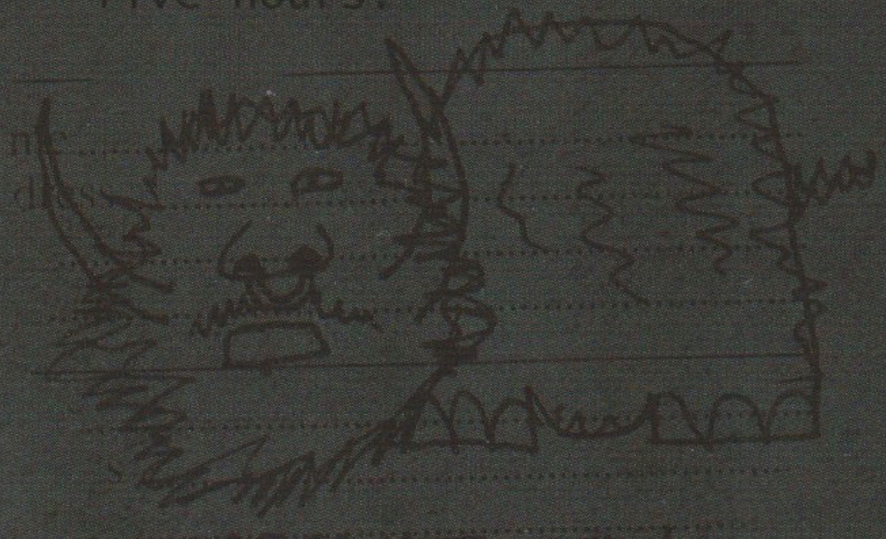


In the sweltering summer of '95

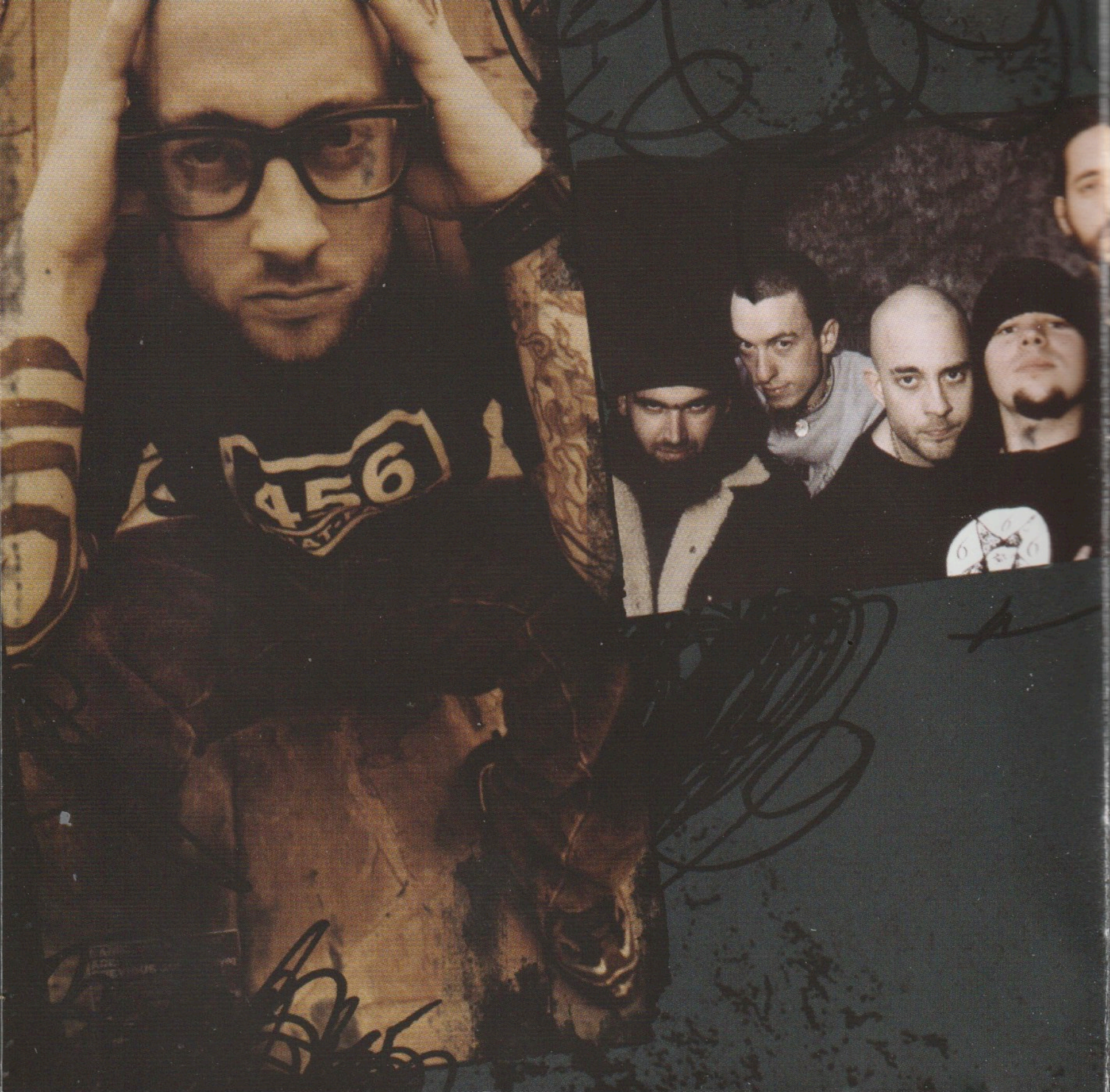
I met James Rushby at a Hard To Swallow gig at The Narrowboat pub in Nottingham, (where we would later do our first gig as 666 Pack). James said he had started a new band (he wasn't then a member of HTS) and was looking for a second guitarist, I asked him to send me a tape, and about six weeks later a tape arrived, it consisted of five songs with just guitar and drums, no vocals and an ultra lo-fi recording of Celtic Frost's 'Dethroned Emperor', (complete with a four minute sample of a London bus right in the middle).

After Johnny Morrow and Doug Dalziel moved to Nottingham, (Justin Greaves was already living there) we rehearsed above The Narrowboat pub (now demolished) in a decrepit (not to mention genuinely haunted) room we shared with Hard To Swallow. We had seven songs done and started sporadically gigging around the UK. Most gigs were poorly attended (apart from Swansea, Nottingham and a few London ones) and even more poorly paid (a squat gig with Dog on a Rope in Leeds netted us £12).

A mutual friend of Justin and myself (Simon 'Mole' Cole) had seen us at a rehearsal and wanted to put a 10" out with three tracks on it (on his Union Mill label). Mole paid for two days at Backstage Studios with Andy Sneap, we recorded seven (?) songs live on the first day, and Johnny did the vocals (in one take) on the second day. I recall it was mixed in four or five hours.



Mole liked what he heard, and we mutually decided to put it out as an album, it was only available at gigs and through mail order from several DIY distro's. We carried on doing shows and rehearsing three or four new songs (that would later appear on 'Our Problem', save for the long Vitus style intro that Doug wrote that which used to start 'Bad Year') After we wrecked all our gear after a gig at The Old Angel with Acrimony (think the chair wrestling scene in Gummo) we were in a rut, as (apart from JPM) we were all on the dole and unable to afford new gear.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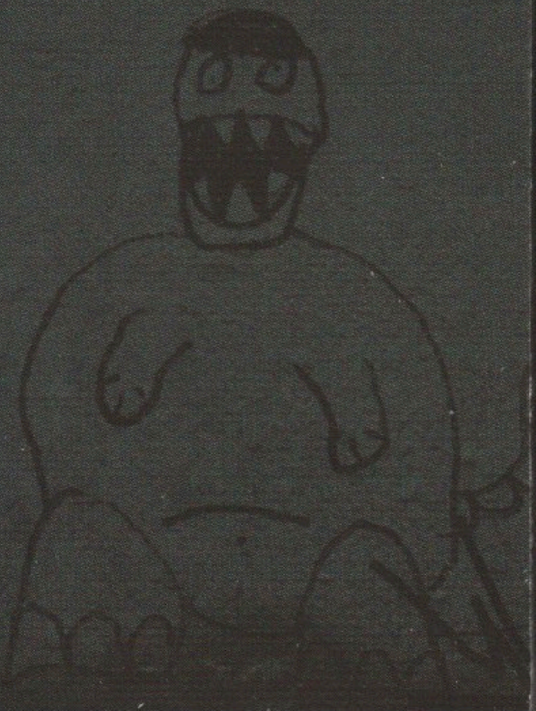
I was at Rock City one Friday night shortly after the last gig and Digby Pearson plied me with ales and offered to put out Iron Monkey on Earache (as Union Mill release had only been available at gigs and was now sold out). I knew this would create a problem as Jim and Johnny were against the band getting more 'popular' and saw Earache as a giant step in the wrong direction. Dig offered a cash advance to sweeten the deal so we could buy new gear and start gigging and rehearsing again. When I put it to the rest of the band, Doug and Justin were up for it, but Jim and JPM were steadfastly against the idea and both said they'd rather just leave.

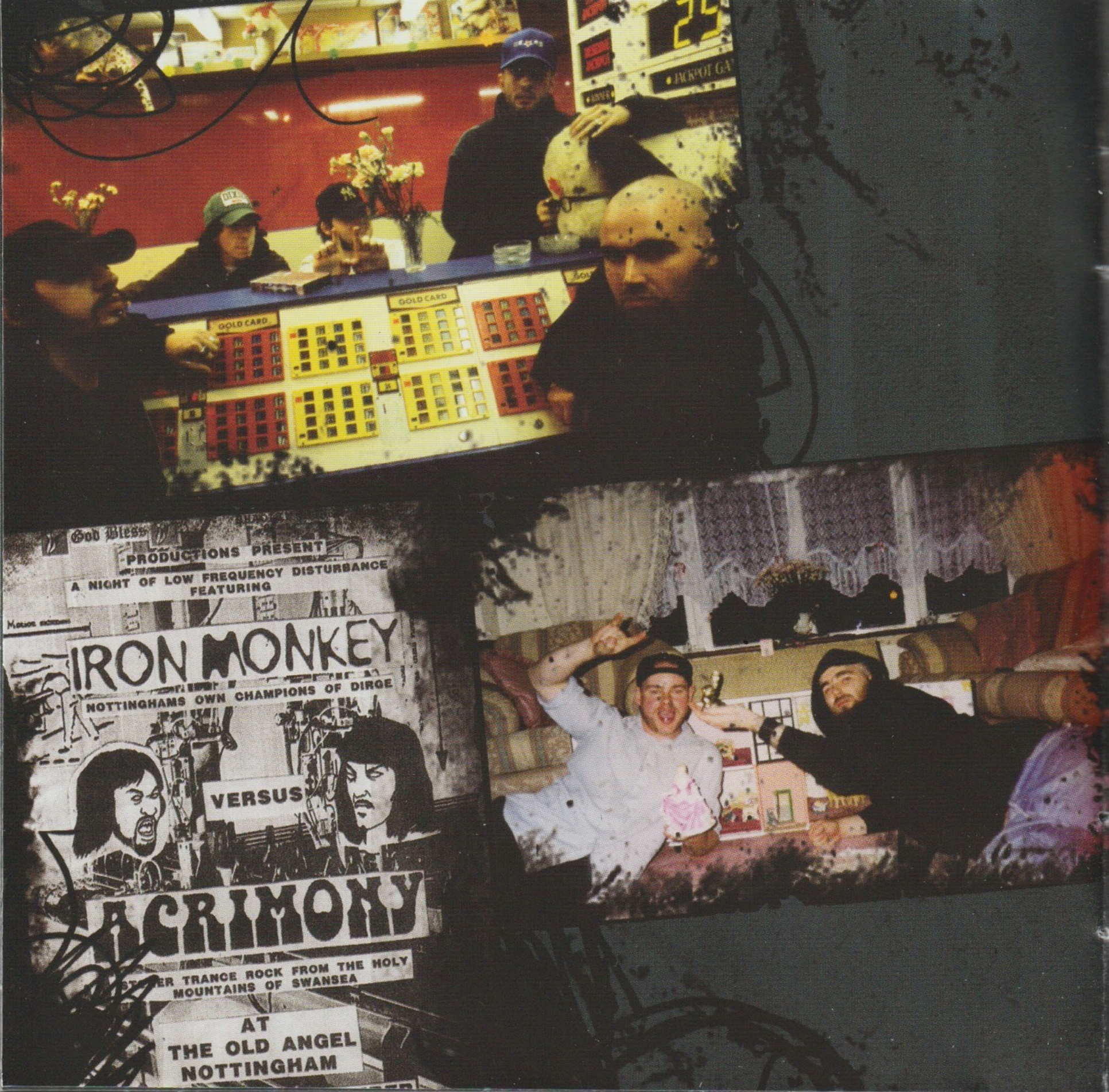
After weeks of inactivity the reality of being equipment-free had dawned on them and they (reluctantly) agreed, so during the traditional Earache curry and booze frenzy a few terms were thrashed out (''I'm not going on tour with Morbid Angel or any of them other dickheads'' (JPM).



Not long after this Dig offered us a two album deal, and much longer time at Backstage Studios with Andy Sneap, again there was an uneasy silence within the band about this (especially when a large contract arrived from Earache at the flat shared by Doug, Jim and Johnny).

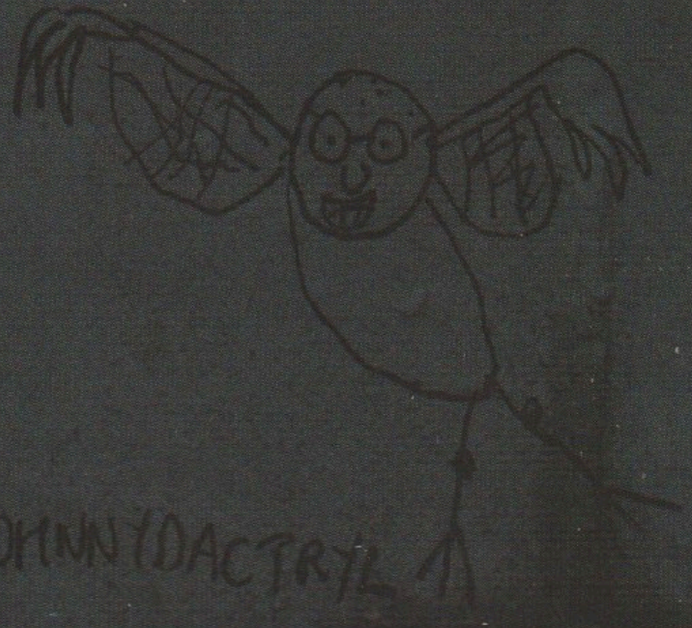
I used to get tanked up at gigs and have the time of my life, rapidly, the intake was getting heavier and was having an undesired effect on my playing and my fellow bandmates, and after a memorable performance at Rio's in Bradford I sealed my fate and was shown the door a few weeks later (and rightly so). I was replaced by Dean Berry who had seen us a few times at The Red Eye in London and had struck up a friendship with Justin. Dean then moved to Nottingham and Iron Monkey recorded a Sabbath tune for an Earache Sabbath tribute album, the second LP 'Our Problem' followed several months later, and several tracks for a Man's Ruin release, the band then toured the UK in support of 'Our Problem'.

I kept in touch with the band through Doug, and as time went on, he told me Jim was leaving after the bands gig at the Dynamo Festival in Holland, and our old friend (and ex-Acrimony guitarist) Stuart 'O'Hara was joining.


GOLD CARD
GOLD CARD
JACKPOT GA
God Bless
PRODUCTIONS PRESENT
A NIGHT OF LOW FREQUENCY DISTURBANCE
FEATURING
IRON MONKEY
NOTTINGHAMS OWN CHAMPIONS OF DIRGE
VERSUS
ACRIMONY
ER TRANCE ROCK FROM THE HOLY
MOUNTAINS OF SWANSEA
AT
THE OLD ANGEL
NOTTINGHAM

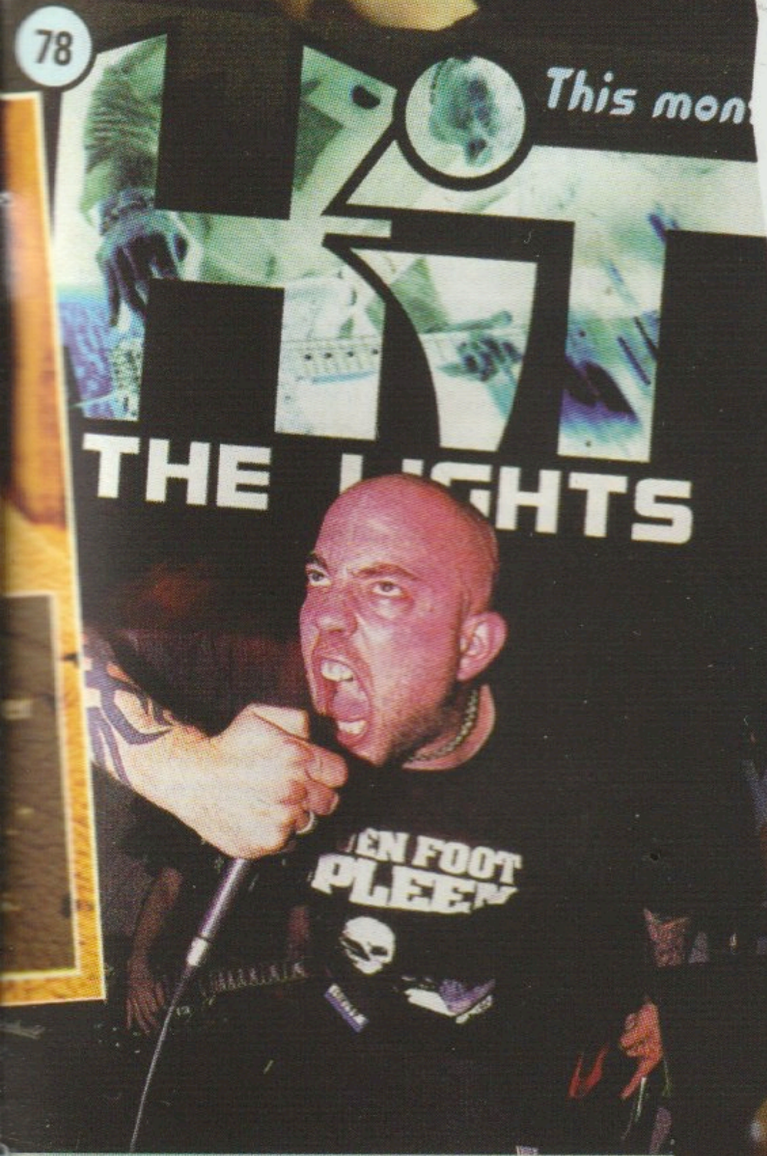
I saw this line up shortly before the ill-fated European tour with Extreme Noise Terror, at the Victoria Inn in Derby, and they were on fire, the new songs they had written were far more up-tempo than the stoner rock leanings of 'Our Problem', if only they could have recorded them with Albini in Chicago for the 3rd album (as was planned).

As with all bands who were around for a relatively short time, there is much folklore the metal celebrity adoration (and overdose) wrecking PA equipment, stealing other bands booze, wrecking other bands dressing rooms, gigs on acid, court cases, Earache's windows being put through, and general drunken chestbeating, some of it is true, but I can't remember which parts. I believe the main reason you are holding this release in your hands is Iron Monkey's secret weapon: John Paul Morrow, his maniacal screams and demonic bellowing really put the hook in me, whilst we wore our influences on our collective sleeves at the beginning, his vocals and his (and Jim's) lyrics gave us different, sinister feel and have not been matched since.



STEVE WATSON 2009

ON MONKEY (Johnny
lorrow): gorilla warfare
August 16
HO might have
ventured
NAME: Doug Dalziel, bass.
AGE: "Twenty years and five."
PREVIOUS JOBS: "Back-scratch
tester and watching telly."
LIKES: " 'WCW Monday Nitro',
Applejacks, Nottingham pubs, real musi
DISLIKES:
"Being in a band with a bunch of pussie
IRON MONKEY



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Liner notes by Steve Watson
Layout by Summer Lacy